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ABSTRACT

A study examined interns, communications corporations, and sponsoring universities to see if there was a "win-win-win" relationship occurring among these three partners. The two-part investigation first involved interviewing 37 past interns, on-site supervisors, and campus coordinators, and second, involved sending out a nationwide questionnaire (developed as a result of these interviews) to another group of 110 past interns, 120 on-site supervisors, and 170 campus coordinators. Findings suggest that respondents disagreed on the intern experience as a whole; on-site supervisors and interns indicated both positive and negative experiences. Interns strongly disagreed with the statement suggesting that interns complete their tasks only in fulfillment of a requirement. In general, results indicated substantive agreement between statements made by the initial interviewees and questionnaire respondents. Issues which remained conflicting were pay, credit, and the nature of on-site supervision. (Two tables of data are included.) (MG)

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Assessing internships as experiential learning: The views of interns, on-site supervisors, and intern coordinators

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Presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention in Chicago, November, 1990.

Introduction

Internships allow students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to experiences off the campus. Internships can be found in virtually all departments within an organization--marketing, personnel, advertising, engineering, and so on. A 1980 national survey conducted by Women in Communications, Inc. revealed that 170 colleges and universities had internship programs. An ERIC search of articles or presentations completed during the last decade revealed over 800 citations. One can assume that internships will remain a part of the curriculum at many campuses.

As one communications professor states, "There is no doubt that both students and communications enterprises benefit from internships" (Ciopalo, 1989, p. 25). The hosting organization is provided, "an economical labor force, a fresh perspective, and a chance to observe a potential employee" (Mason and Butler, p.). On the other hand, students gain from the internship by being better prepared for a profession (Downs, Harper, and Hunt, 1976), and they have the opportunity to make relevant, professional contacts (Ball, 1983). A 1987 survey of Loyola College in Maryland reported that almost 64 percent of the interns surveyed said they had "learned more from an internship than from any classroom experience" (Ciopalo, p. 27).

Internships wouldn't exist if the campus faculty weren't committed to the idea of experiential education, and if they weren't willing to put forth the energy involved with coordinating internships. The sponsoring university benefits via its internship programs because it receives "verification or rejection" of what was taught in its programs (Bialac and Wallington, 1985, p. 67). The feedback received from on-site supervisors can cue the department and university in on student performances in terms of "how well their programs were preparing students for the marketplace" (p. 68). Ciopalo also notes that

intern coordinators see internships as "building experience for future employment" (p. 30).

Internship programs differ greatly. Universities as well as individual departments disagree as to the basic nature of internships, including such issues as prerequisites, duration, compensation, grading, and credit. On-site requirements vary significantly from school to school. Even perceptions of desired outcomes differ greatly. Supervisors, interns, and intern coordinators do not necessarily agree as to whether or not the internship should serve as a job-testing opportunity or simply a hands-on experience.

There are three principle individuals involved with any internship. Internship coordinators are generally assigned the task of designing, implementing and monitoring a program for their departments. Sometimes other faculty share this load; often times one person has this sole responsibility. On-site supervisors must develop relevant tasks for interns, provide assistance and feedback on projects, and evaluate their performance. Interns must fulfill the internship requirements for both school and site.

As Bialac and Wallington note (1985), the idea of an internship is "to create a `win-win-win' relationship for its three partners--the interns, the corporations, and the sponsoring universities" (p. 67). The purpose of this investigation is to examine these three partners to see if there is a "win-win-win" relationship occurring among these three partners. One way to check these relationships is to check their perceptions to see if their perceptions as well as their expectations concerning internships are similar. In order to accomplish this task, this two-part investigation first involved interviewing past interns, on-site supervisors, and campus coordinators, and second, involved sending out a nationwide questionnaire, developed as a result of

these interviews, to another group of past interns, on-site supervisors, and campus coordinators.

Procedure

For the first part of this investigation, 37 audio-taped, face-to-face or telephone interviews of past interns, on-site supervisors, and intern coordinators were conducted by college students enrolled in a junior-level interviewing course in an effort to check their perceptions concerning a variety of internship-related issues and to generate perceptual/opinion statements that would be used for the national survey. No particular effort was made to collect a random sample since the primary interview purpose was to develop a list of perceptual and opinion statements for use in the nationwide survey. Although most subjects were not known to this investigator, they were referred to her by several past interns and intern coordinators across the country.

Past interns interviewed represented a variety of areas, including speech communication, political science, journalism, social work, mass communication, public relations, and clinical laboratory medicine. A list developed at an internship panel at the Speech Communication Association convention served as the pool of subjects for intern coordinators from this discipline. Intern coordinators from several universities in Arkansas who represented other disciplines, including physical education, political science, communications, marketing and management, cooperative education, criminal justice, and technology were also interviewed. On-site supervisors were chosen from lists of past interns at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as well as Central Michigan University. Most on-site supervisors had worked with speech communication interns.

An average of 38 primarily open-ended questions were asked each interviewee. Questions, developed by this investigator, covered many aspects of any internship. Topics addressed by past interns included goals, pay, treatment by the supervisor and other co-workers, preparation for the internship, general impression of the supervisor and quality of feedback, overall evaluation, and advice for future interns and the intern coordinator. Intern coordinators were asked their perceptions of such issues as pay, credit, placement, criteria for placement, evaluation procedures, duties interns perform, and strengths and weaknesses of the students who complete internships. Asked of intern supervisors were questions such as their expectations of interns, the nature of the feedback they provide interns, and their perceptions of the benefits and disadvantages of utilizing interns.

For this investigation, each interview was partially transcribed, and content was summarized by this investigator. The comments and opinions of those 37 interviews served as the framework for the second part of the investigation. These interviews were not analyzed in depth except for opinion statements that served as the basis for a follow-up questionnaire mailed nationwide to a total of 400 past interns, intern supervisors, and intern coordinators.

For the 72-item intern questionnaire, four intern coordinators from schools in the west, east, south, and midwest provided lists of past interns. The four-part questionnaires were sent to 110 individuals who had completed an internship. The first part was primarily demographic and asked 11 questions concerning the nature of their internships and their perceptions of their supervisors. Interns were asked to indicate the importance of seven internship outcomes, such as potential future employment and skills

enhancement for the second part. For the third part, interns responded to statements former interns expressed in face-to-face or telephone interviews. On a five-point scale, interns indicated their agreement or disagreement with each of 52 statements. The fourth part asked respondents to identify tasks they were assigned, describe how they thought the host organization benefitted from their internship, and list courses they thought interns should take before registering for an internship.

The two-part, 59-item on-site supervisor questionnaire was sent to 120 on-site supervisors whose names came from a reference book on internships. The first part asked for general information related to their organization and how they've utilized interns. The second part, consisting of 43 statements, asked supervisors to respond, on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) to a variety of statements made in audio-taped interviews by other intern supervisors. In addition to statements relating to supervisors' general impressions of interns, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with statements relating to the following five primary questions asked during the audio-taped interviews: 1. Do you treat interns as you would regular employees? 2. What expectations do you have of the interns? 3. What kinds of problems have you had with interns? 4. What advice do you have for intern supervisors? 5. What advice do you have for on-campus intern coordinators?

The 63-item intern coordinator questionnaire, which consisted of two parts was sent to 170 intern coordinators. One hundred questionnaires were sent to universities in all fifty states; two per state. Seventy were sent to intern coordinators listed in the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education directory. As with the previous two questionnaires, general

demographic information was requested of intern coordinators. In the first section, they were also asked to choose from a list of ten, the expectations they have of interns. For the second part, 50 statements were developed to elicit perceptions on a variety of issues relevant to the intern coordinator's position, including grades v. credit-no credit, interns' strengths and weaknesses, positive and negative internships, and general advice to other intern coordinators.

Results

For each of three questionnaires, both demographic and interval scale questions were analyzed. The results discussed in this section include the analysis of the opinion/perceptual statements, which reflect the bulk of the questionnaire, as well as general demographic information and responses to open questions.

Given that all questionnaires contain raw data provided during the audio-taped interviews, no attempt was made to create an equal number of positive, negative, and neutral questions. The data analysis included examining statements with which respondents agreed (1.0-2.0 mean rating), statements with which respondents disagreed (4.0-5.0 mean rating), and statements where the responses were distributed among all five choices. This investigator acknowledges that an even distribution would involve 20 percent response rate per alternative. However, given that there were no statements that fit this equation but there were statements having a reasonable distribution, the analysis examines statements where at least 12-15 percent of the respondents chose each alternative.

Intern Questionnaire

As was stated earlier, the intern questionnaire consisted of four parts. Analyzing the first part provided the opportunity to characterize the respondents. Of the 110 questionnaires mailed to past interns, 47 responded. Respondents were generally undergraduates (84%), over half of whom were not required to complete an internship (60%), and who were either not paid or received some compensation other than wages (74%). Three-fourths of those responding indicated that the type of work they did for their internship related to the type of work they intended to continue as a career.

Concerning their relationship with their supervisors, most of the interns (83%) characterized their supervisor as "open." Other terms describing their supervisors were "friendly," "honest," and "fair." This suggests that the interns view their supervisors as accessible, and the intern-on-site supervisor relationship is a positive one.

Results indicate that the size of an organization does not limit the possibility for placing interns, as fairly equal numbers of interns were placed in "very small" agencies as were placed in "very large" ones. Over half interned at medium or large organizations. As with size, there was no clear pattern of placement in terms of for-profit or not-for-profit agencies. Slightly over half worked in for-profit agencies. However, the vast majority (83 percent) described their host organization as service, rather than product-oriented. Size, then, and nature of the organization (profit v. not-for-profit are not an influencing factors in placement. However, most interns work with service-oriented organizations.

In addition to general demographic information, this investigation was interested in examining perceptions of internship outcomes. For part two, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of seven internship outcomes

on a scale of one (not important) to five (very important). The outcomes included the following: potential future employment, professional contacts, practical experience, preparation for future, skills enhancement, self-awareness, and college credit.

It is interesting to note that the outcome receiving the most "5" (very important) votes was practical experience (mean was 4.3/5.0). Of the seven potential outcomes, college credit had the lowest mean ranking (mean was 3.3). Two other outcomes, "preparation for the future," and "practical experience" were rated higher than 4.0/5.0. In addition to college credit, all other outcomes received higher than a 3.0 rating, including self-awareness (3.9), professional contacts (3.6), and potential future employment (3.5). Given that 3.3 was the lowest mean ranking, no outcome was perceived as unimportant.

The main thrust of the intern questionnaire was part three, which asked interns to indicate their agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale (1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree) with fifty-one direct quotes from the interns who were served as subjects for the first part of this investigation. As was stated earlier, statements were not revised to establish an equal number of positive, negative, or neutral assertions. There was no supposition that the statements would be evenly distributed among the various alternatives. The results indicate that in only 10 cases did past interns identify "strongly disagree" as their response to the perception/opinion statement whereas in 27 cases, past interns chose "strongly agree." There were no cases where statements received a mean rating of 4.0 or higher, and only three statements where the median is higher than 4.0. The only three statements whose median fell between disagree and strongly disagree (4.0-5.0) are the following:

1. "All the internship really did for me was fulfill a requirement." (median = 4.5; mean = 3.9)

2. "I think interns are seen as a threat to other employees." (median = 4.2; mean = 3.9)

3. "People tend to be more conservative in their criticism of long-term employees. Because I was an intern, they felt more at ease to criticize me." (median = 4.1; mean = 3.9)

The disagreement with these statements suggests that students perceive their internships to be more than an opportunity to earn college credit outside the classroom, and that their position as intern does not pose a threat to the permanent employees. As interns, the respondents also perceived themselves in the same light in terms of receiving criticism from supervisors.

Eight statements had a 2.0 mean or lower along with a median score less than 2.0, which suggests at least agreement, if not strong agreement with the statements. These statements included the following:

1. "Be willing to take direction and be willing to create possibilities for yourself." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.6)

2. "Money is not everything. Be prepared for the real world. Put your best foot forward and give them all you can give. Even if you're not getting paid--act like you're getting paid $40,000 a year." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.6)

3. "The evaluations I received were positive." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.7)

4. "The on-campus coordinator needs to be involved in the sense that he/she know what the internship is about and what is going on." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.7)

5. "My advice for future interns is to get an internship in the field you would like to get into." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.8)

6. "Tell the supervisor that you prefer a routine evaluation, perhaps a monthly evaluation or something in writing. Let him/her know that you want to become a better asset to the organization." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.9)

7. "Most of the feedback I received was face-to-face." (median = 1.6;

mean = 1.9)

8. "Interns need to be aware that a lot of time is needed for an effective job" (median =1.9; mean = 2.0)

The above statements cover a variety of topics. Past interns do agree that the internship is positive. In giving advice, respondents suggest that the internship should be in the intern's desired field, that it takes a great deal of time, and loosely paraphrased, interns should take advantage of the opportunities presented by the internship. These statements also reinforce the demographic section of this questionnaire that identified face-to-face feedback as the most frequent form of feedback. Interns also agree that the intern coordinator should be informed about their students' internships.

So far, the results have focused on areas where there is consistency, either in negative or positive terms. However, there were statements where there was a solid distribution across all five alternatives. Five statements had at least six respondents (13%) indicating each of the five alternatives. This suggests that there are some issues with which there is little agreement. The five statements are the following:

1. "My internship was my most valuable experience in school." (median and mean = 2.9)

2. "The organization is using you for certain functions and I think those functions should be compensated for." (median and mean = 2.9)

3. "I was treated differently than other employees. They know that it's only temporary in most cases." (median = 3.1; mean = 3.0)

4. "To a great extent, my supervisor guided my professional development." (median = 3.2; mean = 3.1)

5. "The on-campus coordinator should prepare the student for the person he/she will be working for--the personality, the organization, conduct, etcetera." (median = 3.1; mean = 3.0)

These results are relevant in that they indicate areas where interns <u>don't</u>

agree. For example, respondents are not in agreement in terms of how valuable the internship was for them. They also disagree on the pay issue and what the intern coordinator's responsibilities are. Examining the perceptual/opinion statements provides the opportunity to discuss areas of consensus as well as areas where there are different perceptions.

For part four, interns were asked to respond to three open questions. The first question asked interns to identify the tasks they were assigned. Over 24 different tasks were listed. The most frequently identified task was "special project" or "study," which 17 respondents noted. Eleven interns indicated "writing," as their assigned task. This included news releases, manuals, and correspondence. Other tasks which received multiple identification were office work, public relations, radio work, interviewing, market research projects, general research, and selling.

Concerning the second question, interns perceived several benefits they provide their host organization. Although some respondents noted benefits such as fresh ideas, energy, finishing projects, and a new outlook, eleven interns identified "extra help" as the way they benefitted the organization. It is interesting to note that three individuals wrote that they <u>did not</u> benefit the organization.

The third question asked interns to suggest courses students should take before their internships. Seventy-eight responses were recorded that indicated 19 different courses. Three courses identified by at least 10 interns were organizational communication, interpersonal communication, and communication, in general. At least five interns identified the four following courses: business, writing, small group communication, and listening.

On-site Supervisor Questionnaire

Of the 120 questionnaires sent, 35 on-site supervisors responded to the 59-item questionnaire (one respondent only answered the open questions). Included in the first section of the on-site supervisor questionnaire were demographic questions about the size and type of organization and department in which the supervisor worked, the number of interns supervised to date as well as information about their supervisors and how they perceived their interns. Individuals responding to this survey generally worked in for-profit (65%), service organizations (74%). They represented a variety of agencies in terms of size of the organization (ranging from less than 25 to more than 750), size of department (ranging from fifteen or less to over 50), number of interns supervised, interaction with interns, and method of evaluation. Almost half had supervised 25 or less interns, but over three-fourths had hired an intern upon completion of the internship.

Respondents supervised both graduate and undergraduate interns. The vast majority (94%) reported having positive experiences with at least 70 percent of their interns. Responses to an open question support this notion. Supervisors listed benefits of having interns as having extra work, new ideas and enthusiasm, potential new employees, motivating staff, providing a rewarding experience for the supervisor, and providing some connection with academia.

In terms of contact with interns, most (88%) noted that their primary form of communication with interns was face-to-face and occurred, if not daily, at least 2-3 times a week. On-site supervisors did characterize their interns as being self-motivated. Performance appraisal was both formal and informal and occurred one to three times during the internship.

Contact with the university or college was either nonexistent or infrequent (88%). However, one question specifically asked, "How satisfied are you with the contact you had with the university?" The mean score was 2.7 (1 = very satisfied, 5 = very dissatisfied). This suggests that even though the on-site supervisor has little contact with the university, they are not dissatisfied with this.

It is interesting to note that there is no clear agreement as to whether or not interns change other relationships in the host departments. Almost half of the on-site supervisors noted that interns change other relationships in the department "sometimes," while one-fourth indicated no change and one-fourth indicated a definite change. The nature of this change was not addressed.

The second part of the on-site supervisor questionnaire consisted of 43 perception/opinion statements. As was stated earlier, no attempt was made to create a similar number of positive, negative and neutral assertions. This questionnaire tended to include mostly policy or opinion statements, generally stated in a prescriptive or neutral manner. As with the intern questionnaire, there are more "strongly agree" statements than "strongly disagree." Specifically, 16 out of 43 questions had a mean of 2.0 or less, suggesting agreement or strong agreement. No questions had a mean score higher than 3.5. Unlike the other two questionnaires, there were no statements with which supervisors disagreed. However, five statements had responses distributed across all alternatives, suggesting no particular agreement. The questions where strong agreement occurred are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
On-site supervisor statements of agreement

1. "Before they go to the site, interns need to know what kind of job they're going to be doing." (median and mean = 1.2)

2. "In order for the experience to be a substantive one, the employer need to give the intern meaningful things to do." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.3)

3. "I expect interns to be honest with me." (median = 1.0; mean = 1.1)

4. "I expect interns to work up to their potential" (median = 1.1; mean = 1.2)

5. "I expect interns to have the desire to learn." (median = 1.1; mean = 1.2).

6. "I want interns to take responsibility for their actions" (median = 1.1; mean = 1.2)

7. "It's real important for the supervisor to give feedback--both positive and negative." (median = 1.1; mean = 1.2)

8. "The intern coordinator needs to let the student know that this is a work situation and that a certain amount of professionalism is needed." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.3)

9. "Give the intern meaningful responsibility." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.4)

10. "I expect interns to come to work as it is set up." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.5)

11. "I expect interns to be professional." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.5)

12. "The supervisor needs to prepare him/herself for the experience" (median = 1.3; mean = 1.5)

13. "Interns need to understand what you want. You need to show them and have them explain to you what needs to be done." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.6)

14. "I expect interns to interact with staff and become integrated with our staff." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.6)

15. "Having interns is a rewarding experience." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.7)

16. "Intern supervisors should serve as role-models for the interns." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.7)

interns. Not all on-site supervisors are more lenient with interns than they are with their regular staff. Neither have they had the same types of conflicts with interns.

Intern Coordinator Questionnaire

Of the 170, 68-item intern coordinator questionnaires sent nationwide, 77 responded. Eleven of those noted that their programs changed, so they didn't feel the questionnaire was applicable. Hence, 66 questionnaires were analyzed. General demographic information was elicited in the first of two parts to this questionnaire, as well as open-ended questions about compensation, criteria for placing interns, developing intern sites, and preparing students for internships. For the second part, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement on 50 statements generated by the audio-taped interviews.

Slightly less than half of the intern coordinators responding to this questionnaire were from speech communication departments. Over half of the respondents represented institutions with 15,000 students or less, but 40 percent were from colleges or universities with larger student populations. An almost equal number of intern coordinators had placed 50 students or less as had placed over 150 students.

Respondents tend to place students in service industries more frequently than in product industries, and they place a higher percentage of students in for-profit organizations than they do in not-for-profit agencies. One question, in particular, asked, "Who is responsible for placing interns?" Sixty-eight percent reported that student and intern coordinator share this responsibility. The other 32 percent was fairly evenly divided between "intern coordinator" and "student."

The first of four open-ended questions was, "What type of compensation do you receive for directing interns?" Many of the respondents are in positions where coordinating internships is a full-time responsibility, hence their salary is their compensations. Twenty-three respondents noted that they receive no extra compensation for directing interns, and eleven mentioned that they receive some release time.

The second question, "How do you prepare students for their internship?" brought a varied response. The most frequent response was, "prior course work." At least ten intern coordinators indicated they prepare students through the following: orientation, interview, faculty advisor, and workshop.

Intern coordinators were also asked to identify the most important criterion for placing interns. Twenty-six respondents identified grade point average as the most important criterion. The second most often listed criterion, course work, had ten fewer votes. Over ten respondents also indicated faculty recommendations and number of hours completed toward major as other important criteria.

The final question asked intern coordinators was, "How do you develop intern sites." Although many approaches to site development were identified, such as telephone calls, staff visits, word of mouth, and networking, most frequently noted was that students pursue their own intern sites. Second to students developing their own sites was agencies contacting the intern coordinator.

As with the intern questionnaire, the first part of the survey also asked intern coordinators to indicate their agreement with a list of ten expectations identified by other intern coordinators in the audio-taped interviews. The listed expectations are those they have of interns. The only

expectation with which over 90 percent of the respondents agreed was to "be on time." Eighty to ninety percent identified six other expectations. These include, "competence" (89.9 %), "carry through on assigned tasks" (87 %), "appropriate dress" (85.5 %), "maintain professional relationships" (85.5%), "make transition from classroom to application" (84.1 %), and "show up." (82.6 %). The last three expectations, in order of agreement, were, "build a good name for the university" (76.8 %), "realize their place in the organization" (71 %), and "behave as a regular employee would" (66.7 %). The responses to these expectations suggest that there are several factors which interns need to realize in order to create a positive internship.

In general, respondents agreed with the statements drawn from the audio-tapes. Only two statements had a median score of 4.0 or higher, thus fitting into the category "disagree." Those statements with which respondents most strongly disagreed are the following:

1. "I am opposed to interns getting paid for college credit." (median = 4.8; mean = 4.4)
2. "Letter grades are the best because they measure how interns perform in the real world." (median = 4.0; mean = 3.6)

For the first statement, 44 of the 67 respondents noted, "strongly disagree." Twenty-eight respondents chose "strongly disagree" for the second statement. These results suggest that intern coordinators are not opposed to paid internships, and they do not agree that letter grades are the best indication of an intern's performance.

As with the two other questionnaires, there were responses which had little agreement. Using the same criteria as for the other two questionnaires (at least 12 percent per each alternative), only the following two statements had

responses distributed across all five alternatives:

1. "Giving pass/fail or credit/no credit is better than receiving grades because most students end up getting "A" and "B." (median = 2.7; mean = 2.9)

2. "Students seem to put in a little more effort when they are receiving grades for their efforts (as opposed to credit/no credit)." (median = 3.0; mean = 3.0)

Both of the above statements refer to the issue of grades. Given the distribution across alternatives, this issue seems to be one that does not have universal agreement.

As can be seen in the results above, only two statements fell into the category "disagree," and two other statements had responses distributed across all alternatives. For the most part, respondents agreed with the perceptual/opinion statements generated by other intern coordinators. In particular, there were 18 statements that fell into the category, "agree," since they had a mean rating of 1.0-2.0. Those statements are found in Table 2 on the following page.

The areas upon which intern coordinators agreed included what they think intern coordinators' responsibilities are, their notions of what a "perfect" and a "messy" internship would involve, and where they would not want to send interns. There is agreement that interns do not need to have similar experiences. Difficult internships are characterized as one where the agency is looking for cheap, clerical labor, one in which the on-site supervisor is uncooperative, where the student can only do what s/he has been shown to do, and where the student doesn't know what his/her responsibilities are an no one is taking responsibility for that intern. Respondents agreed that they would

Table 2
Intern coordinator statements of agreement

1. "A difficult or "messy" internship would be one where the student doesn't know what his/her responsibilities are and no one takes responsibility for that student." (median = 1.1; mean = 1.3)
2. "A difficult or "messy" internship is one where the firm is looking for cheap, clerical labor." (median = 1.1; mean = 1.3)
3. "When trying to establish an intern program, (the intern coordinator should) make sure you get a commitment from the administration." (median = 1.1; mean = 1.3)
4. "Interns do not need to have similar experiences." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.5)
5. "The perfect internship would involve being exposed to a variety of duties and functions that relate to the student's goals and academic background." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.5)
6. "I would not want to send students to agencies where they were just being manipulated." (median = 1.2; mean = 1.6)
7. "A `messy' internship would be one where the on-site supervisor is uncooperative." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.6)
8. "Advice to new intern coordinators is to make sure standards are clear and direct and that rules and regulations are in writing." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.7)
9. "I would not want to send students where the pressure is so great that people are looking out for their own survival and don't have time for the intern." (median = 1.3; mean = 1.8)
10. "Interns should be evaluated like other employees--attendance, meeting deadlines, professionalism." (median = 1.4; mean = 1.8)
11. "The interns' greatest strength is their enthusiasm and energy." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.6)
12. "It is important to be knowledgeable of the intern's duties. The intern coordinator needs to know what the intern is doing." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.7)
13. "The perfect internship would be a broad, maturing experience." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.7)
14. "Advice to new intern coordinators would be to make sure you have documentation. Know where the student is going, what the student is doing; know the on-site supervisor; be familiar with the site." (median = 1.5; mean = 1.8)
15. "We need to work with supervisors in developing realistic expectations of the interns." (median = 1.7; mean = 2.0)
16. "It's important to know the organization to protect the intern." (median = 1.8; mean = 2.0)
17. "A perfect internship would be when at the end, the student knows that job would really be like in that company." (median = 1.9; mean = 2.0)
18. "A `messy' internship would be one where an intern could only do what he/she was shown how to do." (median = 1.9; mean = 2.0)

not want to send interns to agencies where they were manipulated, where there is so much pressure on the regular employees, interns are not supervised.

On the other hand, a perfect internship is described as one that is a broad, maturing experience that exposes interns to a variety of duties and functions that relate to the student's goals. In giving advice to other intern coordinators, respondents agreed that intern coordinators need to get commitment from the administration as well as have standard regulations and rules that are in written form. They need to know what the intern is doing.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this investigation was to examine the level of agreement on a variety of issues among interns, on-site supervisors, and intern coordinators. Part one of this investigation involved conducting audio-taped interviews from which perceptual/opinion statements served as stimulus statements for three separate questionnaires sent nationwide to past interns, on-site supervisors, and intern coordinators.

The results of this study do not show conclusively that internships are the best experience students can have in college. Respondents seemed to disagree on the experience as a whole. Interns and on-site supervisors indicated both positive and negative experiences. Interns, however, strongly disagreed with the statement suggesting that interns complete their tasks only in fulfillment of a requirement.

In general, results of this investigation indicate substantive agreement between statements made by the initial interviewees and questionnaire respondents. A few patterns exist among all three questionnaires. As would be expected, interns and supervisors alike agreed that interns should work to

their potential and create possibilities for themselves. They also agreed that feedback was an essential part of the learning experience. Interns did agree that internships were very time-consuming, and that it would be best to find an internship in the individual's area of interest. Interns noted that they did not feel they posed a threat to other employees in the host organization.

As was noted in the demographic information concerning internship supervisors, in many cases, students are responsible for their site placement. The on-site supervisors also reported in their questionnaire that they have minimal contact with intern coordinators. When thinking about internships, individuals frequently focus on the intern-on-site supervisor relationship. However, all three questionnaires addressed the intern coordinator's responsibility, and there was agreement among all three parties involved that the intern coordinator should know what the intern is doing and what is happening at the site.

Issues which remain conflicting are pay, credit, and the nature of on-site supervision. Intern coordinators strongly disagreed with the statement claiming opposition to pay. Both interns and on-site supervisors simply don't agree on this issue. The results indicate that some favor paid internships and some do not. There is also little agreement concerning how students should be evaluated. Pass/fail or credit/no credit was not seen as a better method for evaluating student performance as regular grading. Intern coordinators were not in agreement with the notion that interns would work less productively if they were not assigned a specific grade.

In terms of the nature of the on-site supervision, interns strongly disagreed that supervisors will feel more comfortable criticizing them because

of their position. Interns and on-site supervisors didn't agree as to whether or not interns are treated differently. Intern coordinators supported the notion of interns being evaluated in the same manner as other employees, and interns suggested that they receive written evaluations. The question of leniency seems to be an individual one; some supervisors are more lenient, others are not.

The initial data analysis did not seek to compare speech communication departments/interns with other disciplines. A comparison would be helpful in determining how the perceptions of speech communication interns/coordinators compare to others' perceptions. Four hundred questionnaires were mailed in an effort to receive sufficient data for analysis. A higher response rate for intern coordinators could be reached by finding out what universities have internship programs rather than sending questionnaires without knowing the status their internship programs. A follow-up letter to on-site supervisors and past interns might have increased their response rate.

In any event, the information garnered from this investigation is useful in the sense that there are areas where individuals involved in internships agree. The results can also benefit those individuals in terms of allowing the opportunity to develop a list of suggestions and recommendations for future interns, intern coordinators, and on-site supervisors.

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